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## Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces

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4 December 1969

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maintained on station and would extend the area of patrol activity, but such support groups would be highly vulnerable in time of war.

### Capabilities for Sustained Long-Range Operations

85. Soviet efforts to expand and improve the capabilities of the navy to conduct sustained long-range operations are continuing. They are constructing more seaworthy, longer range combatants and new types of auxiliaries, and they are gaining valuable operational experience by more frequent "show-the-flag" cruises and open ocean exercises. The Soviets continue to employ a mix of naval auxiliaries and merchant ships to support naval forces at sea. They have, however, transferred some merchant ships to the navy and have recently done so with one of their largest merchant tankers. The submarine force generally has been adequately provided with specialized support ships to meet operational requirements. Surface forces, in contrast, have operational limitations because of inadequate afloat support, particularly in terms of specialized repair ships, thus somewhat limiting the size of a force that can be deployed at a distance from the USSR and the length of time such a force can maintain a combat capability.

86. Although the Soviets have not constructed large numbers of specialized auxiliaries in the past, they may now be developing new and larger logistic support ships. An unidentified type of large ship presently under construction in a naval shipyard may be the first of a new class of logistic support ships. However, until new logistic ships are available in quantity, the Soviets probably will continue to press for the use of shore facilities such as those made available by the UAR and Syria. We continue to believe that with their present resources the Soviets can support only limited surface naval operations on the high seas for extended periods of time, or larger operations for a few weeks. Without overseas naval shore support facilities any major increase in long-range surface operations would require augmentation of existing auxiliary forces, not only with oilers and cargo ships from the merchant fleet, but also with ships designed to provide specialized technical support to naval forces at sea.

### Capabilities for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Warfare

87. *Weapons.* We believe that nuclear weapons have been allocated to the general purpose naval forces. Nuclear weapons in a variety of types and yields are available for delivery by air- and surface-launched cruise missiles and probably a small number of torpedoes and depth bombs. Soviet naval cruise missiles could carry chemical warheads. The most likely candidates for such warheads are those cruise missiles used by naval coastal defense units. Chemical shells for naval guns mounted on destroyers and cruisers are probably also available; such shells are stored in port and placed on ships only during major exercises or in wartime.

88. *Defense.* The Soviets continue to construct ships with water washdown systems, hermetically sealed compartments, filtered ventilation systems, and decontamination stations that would enable those ships to carry out their assigned

missions in a toxic chemical, biological, or radiological (CBR) environment. Extensive training is provided for the maintenance of a permanent, high level of CBR readiness for the various naval units.

## VI. AIRLIFT AND SEALIFT

### Airlift and Air Assault Capabilities

89. We have recently identified probable airmobile units of battalion or regimental size. They are probably structured and armed along the lines of airborne units. Photography of two of these units stationed on the Sino-Soviet border indicates that each contains 40 to 50 organic helicopters. There may be five more such units along the Sino-Soviet border and one in the Belorussian MD.

90. The Soviets continue to add to their military air transport capabilities. There are now as many as 975 medium transports assigned to military transport units, of which about 800 are AN-12 Cubs. Some 725-750 of the latter provide the main intertheater lift for theater forces and have as a main mission the support of airborne troops. These could lift assault elements of two airborne divisions for airdrop to a radius of about 950 n.m. Some Cubs have improved range and weight-carrying capabilities; 350 of these could lift about 5,000 paratroops with supporting equipment to a radius of about 1,500 n.m., or a maximum range of 2,800 n.m. In an emergency, this lift capability could be augmented by other military transport and by medium- and long-range aircraft in the Soviet Civil Air Fleet.

91. The range and payload limitations of the AN-12 underscore the importance of the new AN-22 heavy transport, which can carry nearly 100,000 pounds of cargo or 175 troops to a radius of some 2,800 n.m. or a range of 5,100 n.m. The first few of these aircraft are now in service; some 25 could be operational by mid-1971. With the AN-22 the Soviets would be able to airlift all types of equipment assigned to a motorized rifle division.

### Amphibious Assault and Sealift

92. We estimate there are currently about 12,000 men in the naval infantry, organized into brigade-size units, with two brigades located in the Baltic Fleet, two brigades in the Black Sea Fleet, one brigade in the Pacific Ocean Fleet, and one brigade in the Northern Fleet. The naval infantry's missions are apparently to assist in seizing critical beachheads and to conduct diversionary operations on the seaward flank. A small force of naval infantry has been present from time to time in the Mediterranean since June 1967; they have conducted several landing exercises, suggesting that the Soviets may intend to use the naval infantry as a token intervention force.

93. The current small number of landing ships in each of the fleet areas restricts the landing force to battalion- or brigade-size. New landing ships with greater speed, operating range and capacity are being built, however, and there will probably be an increase in the strength of the naval infantry.